Quarter of the current year, there was a sharp increase in off-take. However in the 3rd Quarter the average off-take per month has been higher than the monthly average off-take during the last two years.

(b) No complaint regarding the quality of rice being distributed under PDS in Kashmir has been received by the Government during last one year. However, there is a marked preference for the common variety of rice i.e., IR-8 in the valley region of Jammu & Kashmir. Food Corporation of India has been arranging supplies of IR-8 variety of rice from Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh to the valley region.

Special Scheme for the Development of Hill Districts in U.P.

*217 SHRIMATI MALTI SHARMA:
SHRI RAJ NATH SINGH:

Will the Minister of PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have drawn up some special scheme for the development of all the eight hill districts of Uttar Pradesh; and

(b) if so, what are the salient features of these special schemes and the funds earmarked for implementing the scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI BALRAM SINGH YADAVA): (a) and (b) A Sub-Plan is being implemented since 1974-75 to hasten the integrated development of eight hill districts of Uttar Pradesh. This Sub-Plan is being funded partly from Special Central Assistance (which is over and above central assistance being provided to the State under its State Plan) and partly from the State Plan flow. An outlay of Rs. 547.00 crores comprising Rs. 322.00 crores as flow from State Plan and Rs. 225.00 crores as Special Central Assistance has been approved for the Sub-Plan 1995-96.

Two Special schemes drawn up during 1995-96 for the development of eight hill districts of Uttar Pradesh over arid above the Sub-Plan, relate to improvement of irrigation facilities and prevention and control of forest fire. Additional Central Assistance sanctioned during 1995-96 for these schemes are Rs. 10 crore and Rs. 4.125 crore respectively.

कोयले के और अधिक उत्पादन के लिए नयी योजना

*218. **श्री गोविन्दराम मिरी :** क्या कोयला मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि**:**

(क) क्या सरकार ने कोयले का उत्पादन बढ़ाने हेतु कर्मचारियों/श्रमिकों को प्रेरित करने हेतु एक नई योजना शुरू करने का निर्णय किया है,

(ख) यदि हां, तो इस योजना की मुख्य विशेषताएं क्या है, और

(ग) इस मामले में अंतिम निर्णय कब तक लिए जाने की संभावना है ?

कोयला मंत्रालय के राज्य मंत्री (श्री जगदीश टाइटलर): (क) से (ग)कोयले के उत्पादन में वृद्धि किए जाने के लिए कोल इंडिया लि. के कर्मचारियों को प्रेरित करने हेतु किसी नई योजना को शुरू करने का निर्णय नहीं लिया गया है।

Withdrawal of Pension Scheme for P.F. Subscribers

*219 SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Willi the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether he threatened to withdraw the recently announced pension scheme for 18 million Provident Fund subscribers in the non-Government sector during the Tripartite Indian Labour Conference session on 23rd November, ,1995 as per report published in the Hindustan Times, dated 24th November, 1995;

(b) if so, the details thereof and reasons for withdrawal thereof.;

(c) whether it is a fact that some trade unions like CITU are demanding for

"granting pension as third retiral benefit"; and

(d) if so, which trade unions are supporting the scheme and which are opposing it and what is the final reaction/decision of Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY): (a) and (b) The new Pension Scheme for EPF subscribers has already been notified for implementation w.e.f. 16.11.1995. As such there is no proposal to withdraw the Scheme.

(c) and (d) Except CITU, all the Central Trade Union Organisations like INTUC, A1TUC, BMS, HMS etc. have generally supported the new Pension scheme with some suggestions for improvement. The suggestions made by the Central Trade Unions would be examined by the Government with a view to finding out if it would be possible to make any improvement in the scheme without affecting its economic sustainability. The CITU has demanded pension as a third benefit. As pension and EF are considered to be mutually exclusive, it is not possible to give pension as a third benefit.

Setback to Export of Wheat and Rice

*220. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that efforts to export wheat and rice from the country have received severe setback because these commodities could not be transported to the ports for timely shipment;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government have worked out the losses suffered by the country in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) what remedial action Government have taken or propose to take to ensure the timely export of wheat and rice from the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (e) There has been no setback in the export of wheat and rice during the period April—August of the current year. Exports of rice have been 14.56 lakh MTs as compared with 2.35 lakh MTs during the same period last year. The manifold quantitative increase has strained the infrastrsucture. Delays have occured at certain times due to congestion at Kandla Port and transportation problems. These have been resolved by recourse to other ports on the West and East Coasts including minor ports such as Kakinada and resort to road movement to supplement the rail rake capacity. It is proposed to export upto about 3 million MTs of rice during the year and the progress so far has been in proportion. Exports of wheat so far have been 0.24 lakh MTs compared with 0.28 lakh MTs during the same period last year. Losses are so far not foreseen on account of shortfall in exports. Constant attention is paid to resolving the infrastructural bottlenecks to relieve impediments and ensure timely export of wheat and rice from the country.

MOUs signed between South African Forums and India

1297. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any MOUs have been signed between the South African Forums and India; and

(b) if so, the details of Joint Ventures, equity stake and fields/areas in which the two countries have agreed to cooperate?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Details of MOU signed between the different Indian Chambers